

## MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

August 24, 1976

## MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL SCOWCROFT

FROM: The Situation Room

SUBJECT: Morning News Summary

The Baltimore Sun

According to Henry Trewhitt, the U.S. yesterday demanded a meeting of the Military Armistice Commission in Korea today to seek assurance against another North Korean attack on Americans. Announcements from the State Department and from President Ford's staff in Vail, Colo., appeared to be framed to take some of the heat from the confrontation. But military precautions will remain in effect, spokesmen said. (A-1)

In an exclusive interview with a correspondent of the Asahi Shimbun, Japan's biggest daily newspaper, A. Carl Kotchian, former vice chairman of the Lockheed Aircraft Corporation, is reported to have said that his company spent close to \$12 million in Japan to promote Tristar airbus sales. (A-1)

According to a Sun editorial, both the U.S. and North Korea have fortunately taken steps to ease tensions caused by the brutal murder last week of two American officers in the demilitarized zone at Panmunjom. In the U.S., the killings had the effect of diminishing Korean policy as an election issue. the Democratic National Convention had stated in July that, "on a prudent and carefully planned basis, we can redeploy, and gradually phase out, the U.S. ground forces, and can withdraw the nuclear weapons now stationed in Korea...as long as our tactical air and naval forces in the region remain strong." But the Republican National Convention a month later said "U.S. troops will be maintained in Korea so long as there exists the possibility of renewed aggression from North Korea." Governor Carter's reaction to Panmunjom was instructive. Not only did he say President Ford had acted properly "so far as I know," but he backed up administration assertions that "deliberate murders" had been perpetrated. In extricating itself from South Korea over a period of time, the U.S. will have to take special care to safeguard Japan's security position and to avoid an increase in regional tensions that could deflect the normalization of Washington-Peking relations. Indeed, a closer understanding between the U.S. and

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China may be the best of preparations for an eventual U.S. withdrawal from a Korean peninsula where peace seems more assured. (A-14)

The New York Times

Bernard Gwertzman reports that the State Department softened its reaction yesterday and said that the message received from President Kim Il Sung of North Korea expressing regrets about last week's incident in the demilitarized zone was a "positive step." The latest department comment, issued at Secretary Kissinger's orders was considerably less harsh than the earlier reaction. (1)

Paul Hofmann says that the current session of the slow-moving Law of the Sea Conference is threatening to flounder over the issue of ocean-floor mining. (5)

According to Thomas Johnson, a delegation of black Americans urged Secretary Kissinger yesterday to "communicate to South Africa in the strongest terms" America's opposition to the racial policies that have led to several weeks of rioting and more than 250 deaths. (7)

Reuter reports that new black Rhodesian nationalist party has been formed and one of its leaders says it is ready to reopen constitutional talks with the government if guerrilla leaders are allowed to attend. In a policy statement released in Salisbury yesterday the new group called the Zimbabwe Reformed American National Council, said it is prepared to reopen talks with the white minority government of Prime Minister Ian Smith, but would wait for a government initiative. (8)

Drew Middleton reports that planning and operation officers in the Defense Department are confident about the U.S. military position in South Korea and the capabilities for early and powerful reinforcement in the event of war. (11)

An editorial says that the murder of two American officers at Panmunjom last week has provided a grim reminder of what the 41,000 U.S. troops still stationed in Korea are standing against in the divided country. Reinforcement of U.S. air and naval units in the area was a necessary precaution in the wake of last week's incident in order to impress on North Korea's leaders this country's firm commitment to deter any aggressive designs. The challenge from the North which has impelled the U.S. to strengthen -- at least temporarily --

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its military support for South Korea calls for a much more critical look at the shortcomings of the regime that this country's armed forces are helping to defend. An essential firm stand against the aggressive Stalinists in the North calls for an effective underpinning by a government in the South worth standing for. (28)

Tom Wicker writes that Republican oratory at Kansas City and the Republican platform adopted at the national convention seemed to leave no doubt at all that the Grand Old Party and the Ford-Dole ticket were opposed to "big government." But are they? There was no opposition in Kansas City to the biggest government of all -- government by snoops, spooks, taps, and plumbers. In the official Republican Party platform for 1976, year of the bicentennial, there is not a single mention of Watergate. (29)

Russel Baker writes about the Giancana-Roselli murders and their CIA connection. (29)

#### The Washington Post

John Saar reports that South Korean officials, upset by the killing of two American officers in the demilitarized zone and finding the political situation increasingly to their government's advantage, privately are urging military reprisals. (A-10)

The lead editorial states that North Korea's description of its killing of two American military officers as "regretful" falls short of a full apology, but marks a substantial and apparently unprecedented backdown, especially by Asian standards. The North Koreans were evidently impressed enough by the measured show of force and determination mounted by the U.S. after the incident to move to calm the situation. After a period of nervousness, South Korea, publicly at least, has pronounced itself satisfied with the Korean policy being developed by Democratic presidential candidate Jimmy Carter. This is more than a stance of discretion. It is a stance of substantive merit. For Mr. Carter, as he has learned more about Korea, has moved steadily closer to the Nixon-Ford strategic position. Some nuances exist: President Ford calls for American-Chinese-Korean talks before further troop withdrawals, while Mr. Carter now states that withdrawals could proceed out of consultations with Tokyo and Seoul. There is no good reason for either Korea to believe, however, that any American administration would act without due regard for its commitments and responsibilities, not just to the government in Seoul, but

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with respect to the U.S. profound national security interest in the stability of that part of the world. (A-16)

Joseph Kraft writes that the latest incident in North Korea is almost certainly not the opening gambit for a new round of military violence. On the contrary, the killing of two American officers seems to be part of a diplomatic campaign. But the episode serves to focus attention on a truly tense area where the stakes are huge and the degree of control by responsible powers increasingly thin. So it suggests the need for a general review of American policy in northeast Asia. The signs of these feelings are various proposals for change which have been embraced by a wide section of American opinion, including the Democratic candidate Jimmy Carter. One such proposal is for withdrawing all American troops from South Korea within five years. Another -- designed to bind Peking to Washington before Mao dies -- is for normalizing relations with mainland China, even if it meant abandoning commitments to Taiwan. The trouble with these one-shot proposals is that they are not connected with a general process of adjustment in Northeast Asia. The best thing this country can do now, especially with the prospect of a new administration coming in, is to set in motion a general review of policy in Northeast Asia which will serve, if nothing else, to cut off dangerous one-shot proposals. (A-17)

Victor Zorza writes that the Korean incident did not start with the killing of two U.S. officers who were overseeing the trimming of a tree in the demilitarized zone on August 18, but nearly two weeks before that. On August 5 the North Korean government issued a shrill statement which argued that the U.S. was about to attack the North. But no one took any notice of it even though it was somewhat more alarmist than the war warnings it has been uttering with tedious regularity for a long time. Pyongyang had cried wolf much too often. While the evidence produced by Pyongyang has failed to persuade the world that its fears had any basis in fact, it is just conceivable that the North Korean leaders have managed to persuade themselves that the Ford administration really was bent on what they call "military adventure." It is also true that there have long been those in Washington who regard the Pyongyang regime as dangerously irrational, or at least reckless. Some of them have argued that precautionary measures should be taken to prepare for the possibility of a North Korean challenge during the U.S. election campaign. It is said that some such steps have indeed been taken. How would these look to Pyongyang? The North Korean leaders would be only too ready to see them as confirmation of their worst fears. They were much impressed by the Ford administration's action in the Mayaguez affair, and were more vociferous in denouncing it than any other communist

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country, because they saw it as the model for a possible U.S. action against North Korea. There are quite a few people even in the West who would be more than ready to suspect the Ford-Kissinger administration of deliberately provoking a Mayaguez-type incident during an election campaign. And the North Korean leaders are more suspicious of U.S. motives than are the leaders of any other communist country. (A-17)